

Spring 2015 Trapper Education Committee Meeting

March 20, 2015, 7 p.m.

Meeting began at: 7:00 P.M. (18 in attendance)

Meeting ended at: 11:22 P.M.

WCTEP Committee Attendance: Bryce Larson, Mike Widner, John Irwin, Junior Prudlick, Nate Kroeplin, Geriann Albers, John Olson, Scott Zimmermann

WCTEP Instructors in Attendance: Mike Kortenof, Arnold Groehler, Maynard Breunig, Bob Barnett, Michelle Sauers, Joe Martin, David Cunningham, Lee Sillars, Al Nickel, Bryce Larson, Nathan Roberts

1. Updates from WTA Statewide Coordinator (Bryce Larson)

Hand out provided. 74 classes, 1,480 graduates. Average of 20/class with a range of 4 to 46. Classes in 50 counties and 11 districts. First instructor newsletter mailed out in mid-January with plans of doing a couple per year. Summarized a few items in the instructor survey. Instructors interested in having a special meeting for all instructors.

2. Updates from WTA Correspondence Course Coordinator (Mike Widner)

85 graduates so far for 2015, with another 70+ signed up as well. Trying to encourage them to watch for a local trapper education course near them rather than take the correspondence. 2014 – 561 graduates (less than 2013, which was around 680). 85 to date, which is slightly below the level of the last two years at this time. Mike predicts around 300 for the year.

3. Updates from WTA Wolf Trapper Ed Coordinator (John Irwin). There were 190 graduates last year, with 6 classes. Next year? Not sure, discuss later. Mead is already reserved for next year... Almost a 50% no-show during our first two classes once permits were issued.

4. Updates from DNR Furbearer Ecologist (John Olson)

Furbearer Management

- Tissue Extraction Events (wolves; bobcats; fishers – 4 events with 1 remaining)
- Quota setting; permit issuance; harvest reporting; harvest results (page 16 of WI Trapper)
- With the closure of Wolf Harvest in Zone 3, effective Friday, Dec. 5 at noon, Wisconsin's 2014 wolf harvest season ended.

Furbearer/Trapper Education Training

- Track Training – Dr. Halfpenny. 50 participants.
- Furbearer Registration Training – Nate Kroeplin. 20+? DNR Wildlife participants
- University Fur School – two schools completed this year – Northland College and UW-Madison, with UW-Stevens Point end of this next week.
- Wildlife Fur School – 2015 was completed today, a week-long training session for wildlife personnel from DNR and other agencies/states.
- Advanced Fur Handling – District 5, completed.

AFWA Efforts

- Annual meeting of the Technical Working Group will occur in Charleston, S.C. where we will finalize a ten year strategic plan, identifying the trap research needs of greatest importance to various states/regions. John Erb of MN DNR is the new chair of this committee.
- CITES involvement. Black Bear are Appendix II species with no states with tagging approval. Survey of states last summer resulted in a recommendation to the Fish and Wildlife Service to pursue changes in the Federal Register to allow states with interest to apply for such tagging authority. This would allow harvesters and states to more easily manage the movement of bear parts across international borders.
- Joint Management Committee meeting was cancelled in St. Louis, MO last October due to international issues. U.S. is requesting written reports of annual progress from Russia, Canada and the EU and will then build a summary report. This is important to comply with the stipulation of annual sharing of information at the JMC level. 2016 is the deadline to complete obligations of the Agreed Minute with the EU.
- New edition of the North American Furbearer Management publication. It will include greater emphasis on humane trap efforts; wolf management and regulated harvest in western Great Lakes.

BMP Effort

- Success in the lower 48! All 21 furbearer species now have an initial published document that identifies humane traps for each species; basic information about the species; and basic information on trap techniques.
- National Conservation Need – Proposal submitted in late 2013 and was accepted and approved in 2014, effective for the calendar years of 2015 & 2016. Roughly \$220,000 total. Slightly more than ½ will be invested in a national survey of trap use surveys of all states. Remainder is devoted to

important outreach efforts identified as Fur Schools and Trapping Matters Workshops. Two regional workshops completed (New York and Wisconsin) with one more scheduled in late spring in Lewiston, Idaho. Announcement of Trapping Matters workshops will be going out to all states. An initial proposal has been accepted to conduct such a workshop at the annual meeting of the Wildlife Society in Winnipeg, Canada in October.

- Two species remain - arctic fox and wolverine, both in Alaska. Arctic fox trap testing will occur in late August with wolverine planned for early 2016.
- Necropsies of 2014 trap research will occur in Wisconsin sometime in July, either at the Fur Shed or at the Ashland DNR garage. State vets from WI; MO; NoDak are certain, with others from PA and/or MS possible. Currently organizing a team of skinnners in an effort to salvage quality pelts of red fox and coyote for educational purposes both within WI and for other states with interest.

Furbearer Planning Efforts

- **Species of Greater Conservation Need** are being developed. Marten will be included, but all other furbearers are not candidates with the exception of fisher, which will be listed as a potential species in the future. SGCN are important in various management efforts/planning efforts.
- **Beaver Management Plan.** Final draft is near completion and will be reviewed by our top level administration for approval to take to various internal policy teams; user groups; and the public. Public meetings are being recommended similar to the initial input sessions with one per beaver management zone.

5. Law Enforcement Update. (Nate Kroeplin)

Currently 12 warden recruits in the 2015 class. LE Fur School occurs the first week in December...last 5 years. Focus is more toward law enforcement with recruits going on real trap lines. Question from Arnie Groehler regarding ROW trapping confusion. "Don't assume permission – ask." Waukesha County easements a concern, where the landowner still owns the land. Request is to have it listed far more clearly in the front of the Regs. Instructors would like to have guidance. Might want to also list a website where DOT identifies sites where trapping is allowed. Discussion of ROW rule and the problems we have. One simple idea is to have a rule that says "No trapping within X feet of a public roadway without written permission."

6. Updates from DNR Statewide Coordinator (Geriann Albers).

This is Geriann's third year with the DNR trapper education program. The Ag teacher training has been going well with an expansion into Biology teachers. Overall, things are going well. FTW summer camp is not occurring this year.

7. Budget status – Trapper Education & Incidental Fur. Request was made to increase the outreach effort by \$1,300 to meet the current level. This would put the PR annual DNR portion at \$5,000. Geriann recommended we consider an increase for the publication line as well. With the Trapper Post purchase would recommend a budget of \$10,000 for one year, to allow the purchase of the new national trapping publication. We will let the WCTEP Committee know of the final cost/publication once we know. Question came up regarding the funds appropriated for appreciation banquets. We budget \$1,000 annually, but LE has never requested the funds. There is some confusion regarding TE Instructors being invited, but some of this might be due to turnover of Safety Specialists.

8. Projects to reduce incidentals update

- a) The two-way body-grip triggers researched in New York were sent to field wardens and provided to trappers with interest at the 2014 Fall Rendezvous. Nathan Roberts built a brochure we included with the purchased two-way triggers. Nathan reported that he's working with Wildlife Services on a study to compare these triggers against other trigger configurations. Half will be the New York triggers versus the current otter avoidance triggers. Field trappers will keep detailed records of animals caught; trap set up; lure used; strike location; etc. Expect a summary report at the Fall WCTEP meeting.

9. Instructor Survey update. Effort to update our data base occurred last year. 185 active instructors so far. WTA is expected to be the enforcement arm for WTA member instructors that have violations (game violations or ethics violations). Instructors are to be involved in a class at least once every two years. New membership was costing us about \$12,000 when we granted free membership. Now, by doing it at a "half-cost" we're signing up more new members at a considerable savings. What else can we do to show appreciation to members that are dedicated to the association and trapper education. Mileage costs are hurting some members that travel a considerable amount. How can we reimburse those that sacrifice in conducting trapper education?

- a) Have new database

- b) Newsletter – might be able to minimize paper copies needed via electronic connections.

10. Instructor appreciation item ideas? Recognition pins? Following are recommendations the committee asked that Bryce and Geriann build from and come back with a final proposal (electronically) to the WCTEP: 1. Recommend a certificate, like was done years ago? 2. Suggest taking the first year of involvement as their initial year in TE – committee supported doing so. Mike Widner had an old certificate that he will share with Geriann. 3. For every 5 years they get another recognition. Give them something they can be proud of. Possible recognition at the annual meeting(s)? Name tags with years of service? Shirts? Hunter instructors get a vest after 5 years.... How about a rocker patch (every 5 years?) Give folks a selection of items to pick from, one for each of the various categories (every 5 year increments) and a person could pick any item up to the maximum number of years involved. One idea is to purchase shirts for those requesting such and then work with Susan (Widner) with any additional embroidery. What about the vest option?

11. Wolf Trapper Ed Future Plans. Arnie – our opportunity to strengthen our program, not to do classes when wolves are listed. Scott Z. – doing a learn to trap program at Horicon. Agree with Arnie, let's rebuild. John Irwin – put things together on paper as an outline of what we want to do... no different than trapping a coyote, just need more on ethics. Fold it into our normal class when we're back into regulated take. Arnie – concerned that adding anything to the class is too much. It's a trophy animal and should be a stand-alone item. Scott Z. – Agrees with Arnie, suggesting we slowly work wolf trapping into our class structure over time, more like ten to twelve years.... Should we then build a mini-manual for a special wolf class? Possibly export it to other states? Recommend we not have classes this year; begin to work toward a document/chapter; keep the species unique; etc.

12. District TE supplies update. Geriann. Displays/projectors were provided to the respective districts at the fall rendezvous.

- a) Articles collected through trapper education efforts for the fur collections are being tanned. What about those critters we can't provide, do we ask district trappers to donate, or do we do an outright purchase? Scott Z. – president should have his own personal collection..... Recommend purchasing a complete fur kit for each of the respective districts, plus two extra kits; minus those furs we can provide via trapper education (otters, fishers, etc.) Also inventory all districts to see what else they need to complete an existing fur kit (replace lost or damaged skins).
- b) Tents being looked into.

13. New Instructor Orientations and Apprentices

- a) Needs for orientations? None signed up for Sunday.
- b) Lack of apprentices in database. Only 20 listed...seems low, are we missing a few?
- c) Apprentice check-off form. Seems to be working well. Problem is the background check delay. Bryce inherited some application forms up to two years old that weren't submitted to LE, until now. We will notify district coordinators regarding the results of background checks.

14. New manual training needs? Do we need to do such? Committee recommendation is it's not needed. How about a note in the next newsletter regarding using the manual as a reference? Manual is working well once a person has looked through it once or twice. Suggest that the manual is an updated reference for them to use in their trapper education efforts. Bryce also suggests we try and meet with instructors from District 4 and other Districts with interest.

15. Instructor use of course fees.

- a) Computers/tech. Question asked is if an instructor could use the 50% of registration fees for the purchase of a computer. No, this is outside of the basic needs of trapper education program. Primary need is the purchase of electronics to enter their class roster. Not appropriate to use trapper education funds for electronics.

16. Online Trapper Ed. Canned program does not meet our needs. Geriann to meet with folks within our agency to determine if we can construct such an infrastructure. Mike Widner: January Board meeting discussion. What we don't want to see is online certification without a hands-on field day. If there is a field day for both correspondence and on-line, then it would cut down on the number of folks taking correspondence. Last three years have graduated 200-300 after September. Mike cannot, and will not continue doing this forever. MOU says we only have to provide one class/district. Add to the MOU that we have at least one field day per district for the on-line/correspondence students. We have assessments in the back of the manual which should be used for this field day. This should reduce the number of correspondence participants. Recommendation is to use the Calcomy (sp) course with the requirement of participants then must sign up for a hands-on test-out field day. Target 2016 as the completion date; and have it available for both correspondence and on-line. Correspondence was written in 1989 to accommodate

the few who could not participate in a classroom. It has now climbed to an excessive level. Field testing would be just that – field testing, not instruction. If they can't pass the test, they fail. No time to babysit, just test. Our manual is on-line and they would know what our field test-out is because the assessments are contained in the back of the manual. Consider having a limit on the number of times/year a person can "test out" if they fail. Consider seeing if the correspondence course might qualify as the on-line; or if we can work our on-line manual into our on-line course. This to be as an action item on the fall rendezvous.

17. Ag Teacher training update. 35 ag teachers to date(# correct ?). Geriann - Look at putting out a "call" to science teachers to measure their interest. Junior – teachers need to give instructors more lead time in attendance of their classroom course. Some of the instructors have really expanded the program with teachers and students excited about the new opportunities.

18. Publications.

- a) New publications – Social Media brochure. Print order came in. Has been reviewed by AFWA and others with a request to build a national version from our template.
- b) Publications needed? None recommended at this time.

19. Next Meeting? Rendezvous. Thursday prior to – at the Holiday Inn. September 10th at 7 PM pending room availability.

20. Other Business.

- Geriann – Instructors certifying a single person class. Problem? Suggest a minimum class size? In the past we didn't have a minimum to allow folks to work one-on-one with those who have a difficult time in groups/disability. Hunter education has a minimum of 5. Recommend a minimum of 5 with consideration of less if it merits. John Irwin – disagrees, let the instructor decide the merits of doing a class with so few. Example was a class roster that was once 9 that is now 4. We recommend a minimum of 5 participants, but use your discretion.
- John Irwin – Any chance that we put together a search capability into our program so we can locate instructor numbers? Should be out there already, as per Geriann forward about a month ago?

- Ethical, responsible use of trained dogs with furbearers. Currently working with two/three dog organizations interested in promoting responsible use of trained dogs in the harvest of furbearers.
- MOU review? Update the MOU for the fall rendezvous....
- PR trailer. FYI. Committee supports.
- Closed session. Suggest building a template letter for any disciplinary needs.
- Chris Cold DVD on trapper education training. Move forward.

Minutes by J. Olson

DNR Furbearer Specialist